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Sen. Brown and Rep. Caswell work to bring MRI machine to Branch County

Machines can diagnose multiple sclerosis, brain tumors, and strokes in their earliest stages

Thursday, October 30, 2003 – Sen. Cameron S. Brown and Rep. Bruce Caswell today unveiled legislation to provide Branch County with the means to more easily obtain a fixed Magnetic Resonance Images (MRI) machine. The county is currently without a fixed unit.



“Our goal is to create an environment for hospitals to provide quality healthcare to Branch County residents,” said Brown (R-Fawn River Twp). “When it comes to diagnosing life-threatening illnesses and diseases, hospitals can’t wait around for a mobile unit or be required to send their patients across county lines. We will work together with the leadership in both houses to move this legislation forward for our shared constituents.”

The legislation, SB 807 and HB 4513, allows rural medical centers easier access to a fixed MRI machine by modifying the state’s Certificate of Need requirement. The requirement mandates that hospitals must receive state approval before making certain expenditures.

“This legislation makes it easier for rural communities like those in Branch County to purchase a fixed unit capable of servicing the needs of its patients,” said Caswell (R-Hillsdale). “I look forward to working with the community and Senator Brown as we move ahead.”

The proposal was prompted by concerns from a number of small and rural hospitals that the current MRI standards are not sufficient to meet patient needs in their communities and that mobile service providers are unable to offer them sufficient time to meet demand.

Branch County Community Health Center serves as the only MRI facility in Branch County, and is more than 45 minutes away from a fixed MRI unit.

An MRI machine takes pictures of the human body in “slices” and then uses a computer to create a three-dimensional image of the section of the body examined.

MRIs are used for diagnosing several health problems, including multiple sclerosis, brain tumors, shoulder and muscle injuries, spinal infections and strokes in their earliest stages.

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